

Subject: HB 5425

Dear Representative Fleischmann:

I am the father of an autistic 16 year old boy. I live in Barkhamsted, Connecticut.

I am urging your support for HR 5425 AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION section 2 and conversely urging opposition to section 3.

Section 2 requires applied behavior analysis to be overseen by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). The efficacy of applied behavioral analysis is scientifically documented and peer reviewed. Proper application of applied behavioral analysis requires a BCBA. The BCBA's are the scientists of our modern education system. I cannot understate the power of this therapy when properly administered. I have witnessed this in my child and in others in programs overseen by behavioral professionals. This is a critical step in educating our disabled children.

Conversely I urge rejection of section 3 of this act. This moves the burden of proof to the effectiveness of a special education program from the school district to the challenger. This effectively makes it the domain of the parent. The I.D.E.A. statute is a mystery to the typical parent. The special education process with its dizzying array of acronyms (PPT, IEP, SLP) and procedures puts the parent at tremendous disadvantage at the get go. Effective education programs can be readily proven so. I encourage supporters of this provision to provide real data as to first what the cost actually are and second why does it cost so much to prove a programs efficacy. (Or is this obfuscation the real expense?) Effective programs by their very nature collect and respond to data, proving their efficacy.

The current process leaves much room for improvement. Only a very few school districts have shown leadership in providing effective services for handicapped children. Until this can be rectified, placing greater authority in their hands must be carefully scrutinized.

Thank you.

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